

21.
INTELLIGENCE

FROM

THE ARMY,

In a LETTER, Dated from

His Excellencie's
QUARTERS, NEAR
READING,

June 5. 1643.

WITH

A Relation of Captain *Wingates*
escape from *Oxford*, and the condi-
tion of the Prisoners there, be-
ing about 70.

LONDON:

Printed for *Samuel Gellibrand*, June 8.

MDCXLIII.

THE HISTORY OF THE

ROYAL SOCIETY OF LONDON

FROM ITS FIRST INSTITUTION

TO THE PRESENT TIME

IN TWO VOLUMES

BY JOHN HENRY

STEELE

ESQ.

OF THE SOCIETY

LONDON

PRINTED BY

JOHN HENRY



INTELLIGENCE

from the Armie:

With a Relation of Captain *Wingates* escape from *Oxford*, and the condition of the Prisoners there, being about 70.

S I R,



You wonder at my silence, and I at your wonder, howsoever you have been pleased to give my Letters the title of *Mercurius*, I can assure you the Writers Brain and Pen are not so *Mercuriall* as to make something of nothing, no not much of a little. *Oxford Mercury* is *Ovids Mercury*, that steals Oxen, and with a charmed Rod endeavours to beslumber and stupifie the people, till their eyes, or what should be as dear to them, become a prey for the ornament of *Funoes* Birds. But I am so professed a servant of Truth and Seriousnesse, that I al-

most repent me the mention of a *Fiction*, though very well recompensed with the reality of the *Morall*.

But since you presse me to write something, to give you evidence that I can deny my self sooner then my friend, I have forced my Pen to this Letter, and my self to deal more freely with you then the world with me, and tell you some of my thoughts: for in this vacancy of action I have endeavoured to turn Idlenesse into Meditation. And first taking my self something concerned in affairs of the Church, I have spent (it may be cast away) some time and thoughts in the consideration of that unhappy and unnecessary difference betwixt the pretendrs to Reformation, I mean the more sober part (for as I have forgotten the *Bishops*, so I shall scarce trouble my self with thoughts of the *rigid Separatists*) some whereof are called *Presbyterians*, others *Independents*; betwixt whom I conceive the *Divisions* stronger then the *Distinctions*. First, let me disclaim any interest in the Quarrell, and then give you my observation of it. I hope I may be allowed to a *Sceptick* in this point till our learned *Antiquary* hath declared himself concerning the necessity of any Government at all, Though some say, The bottom of the businesse is, Not so much no Government, as no other then what hath been; And our judicious Senate made their Determinations upon the Disputes of our reverend Synode; if these be Riddles, time will expound them. But to the purpose (if it be possible) this *Difference*, or rather *Defiance*, for the imprudence of men hath almost strained it so high, is doubtlesse *unseasonable*, it may be *unreasonable*. For the *season*,
we

we doubtlesse have enemies now that challenge our united strength: For the *reason*, something it's like there is, but if there be much, there is more then I discern. This may be observed in generall, That the feud is more bitter among the *disciples* then the *masters*, and where there is least *light* there is most *heat*; They agree best when neereft, and a sober Conference makes them almost friends: Were I for a Presbyterie, I could yeeld to be Independent till there should fall in an evident necessity of *Communion* with neighbour Churches: Were I for Independencie, I should rather dispense with my Opinion than Trueth and Justice, when they chalenged a necessity of *Communion*. As for the other differences, there may be some mistake; The *Independent* party compare their opinions with the practise of these Churches corrupted, and not with the rules of Churches, as their supposed adversaries would have them constituted: I hope they would both agree to those rules which should be most for the increasing and establishing the Church of Christ. For the present, as I see in this vacancy no *Presbyterian* Discipline exercised, so neither would I have *Independentiary*; if it be of absolute necessity to make this Separation, let the world be evinced of it, and the grounds and rules be known; if not, let it for a time be dispensed with; Some think it would be as to this place and time, onely a dispensation with a fancie in the most, and the reputation of a taking opinion: For the reall advantages of gathering a scattered Church are (say they) hard to be understood, and the great pretended benefit of Covenants and Communion, in these distances

and confusions, lost. I have heard some look upon it as a great fault, that some men make that their great glory and rejoycing, which is the shame and sorrow of the Church of Christ, That they are divided from others whom yet they acknowledge not to be divided from the Head; which some say is a Schisme: And it may be worthy consideration whether it can be a matter of glorying; I am of this or that Division; when the Prayer of Christ was, That we might be one, as his Father and he were; and even the distinction of Assemblies, is but a fruit of naturall necessity, not a part of Morall beauty. In brief, it is to be wished, rather then hoped (yet, *quid non speremus amantes*) that these Differences and Distances were reconciled; but to be hoped as well as wished, that they may be for the present consopited; and doubtlesse they would, were it not for some *Dreamers*. They are but both yet upon the way (they hope) for their relief; Why should not *Iosephs* counsell be acceptable, if in this new world any old counsell were to be taken, *See that ye fall not out by the way*? I am sure the world would laugh at me, if I should be now in a hott quarrell with my brother whether he or I should be governour of *Hispaniola* when we had got it from the *Spaniard*. Why may not the accomplishments of these men be as far off? I adde no more then this solemn Obtestation; For this Cause and Kingdoms sake, for the Churches, for Christ his sake, let us labour to keep *the unity of the spirit in the bond of Peace*. If we will not agree, we must be beaten together, and by a *communion of affliction* be helped on to *union in affection*; let us prevent the rod, and
fashion

fashion our selves as dear children. But *enough*, I hope not *too much* of this, I must write, not according to the extent of the businesse, but the limits of a Letter.

There is something else hath challenged part of my thoughts, which I shall with equall freedom impart; and that is the variety of new Doctrines, under the most glorious pretences of *new light* and *free grace* spread abroad; I will not stand to examine them, but truly the issue of my thoughts upon them hath been, just thankfulnesse to my God, that I had received my Principles, I hope and beleeve, a form of sound Doctrine from a sober and pious Ministry, which in mercy was afforded me, before this Libertinisme of opinions, in which it is impossible for the heart to be established. And here let not me be thought guilty of confining men to the bounds of former ignorance; I wish to all the Saints a growth in grace and the knowledge of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which yet I think in fundamentall points of Conversion and Salvation, must not be expected to be a laying new Principles, but a building upon the old, *scil.* Repentance from dead works, and Faith toward God, working by love unfained. If nothing but noveltie will suffice, this is a new and a living way, though Preached and practised of old. But I will passe no absolute censure of these mens raptures, lest I be thought to speak evil of the things I know not, till I see the fruits of them, Leaves is the most that they have yet produced, and scarce enough to cover their own nakednesse.

But

But it's like you expect something concerning the present state of the *Common-wealth*, if there be any such thing; I must confesse I have been so presumptuous as to adventure some thoughts this way, and can reduce things to nothing but *confusion*, in which *confusion* there is yet a *distinction*, for it is threefold; a confusion of *ends*, a confusion of *means*, a confusion of *mindes*. For ends, it may be easily discerned that on both parts there are different, on the *Anti-parliamentary* part, the conspiracy is not a consent, but as in the *Ephesian* confusion, some cry one thing, some another, all, it may be, Great is *Diana*: On this side likewise there are doubtlesse different aims in the same actions, and I observe every man hunting his brother with a net, and sounding him with a plummet to know his end, possibly to prevent his execution of it, but men are grown so mischievously cunning that they do as studiously conceal their designes as prosecute them. I can onely say that some of them are not so good and publike as they ought, though it be strange that men should have so high an opinion of their persons or places, as to think blood and rapine, and all the other miseries of war, to be no more then a sufficient price for their obtaining particular ends in this publike distraction. As for the rest, I shall wait the discovery of time, and rest satisfied in this, That the supream disposer hath *finem supra finem*, some end or other for his own Glory, and the good of his Church and people, which he will accomplish in the best season, in the midst of all the *croffe* and *underworkings* of the sons of men. But for their own sakes, I could wish men were a little honester, though I hope
their

(7)

their mischief shall not reach the publike. Some things, I confesse, I could, were it not for a resolution to the contrary, be angry at, That the *iniquity*, I speak of the *Cause* (for as for *persons*, there is *iniquity* on both parts) should lie on the one part, and yet the danger almost solely on the other. Were there no other world or Kingdom but this, I should never do as I do, but presently engage my self on the Kings part, and expose my self to the mercifull justice of the Parliament, especially if I had relation to some Lord, where I might, although after a ctuall service against them, either lie in honourably with the Earl of *Lindsey*, or have license to walk abroad with another Lord, to ayre his tainted honour; or with a third and fourth, be admitted to the House again for further mischief: it were not much matter to lie in the *Gate-house* at *Westminster*, and beg under the professed notion of a *Cavalier*, which they there constantly do. Not that I *envy* any mans so acquired security, that which I enjoy of conscience, is far more to be prized by all honest men. But there are some others whose felicity you think a sober man may *emulate*, and that is those who professe themselves yet on the Parliament part (I know not how this new expected discovery may shake their Copy) and yet can with the same affection bear of the successe or losse of that which is yet called their Cause; these are sure men of a gallant temper, and excellent wits, that make so good use of any thing; I wondred at it a while, but after found it to be this; Their end is any kinde of Composition, that they may have at least their old enjoyments upon any

B

terms,

terris ; it may be an acquisition of some new advantages, if they can do good service, and to this, good and ill successe are equally conducive ; the prosperity of the *Parliament Forces* will make the King more pliable ; the disadvantage, will abate of the rigid humour of the *Puritan faction*, to them equally formidable : Think you not that these men have learnt the Apostolicall Lesson, *In any condition to be content* : Howsoever, I wish them the Apostolicall Benediction, *Grace and Peace*.

But you require my most serious thoughts concerning the issue of the present businesse, What these things are like to come to : Let us be wise to sobriety ; If we look to our affairs as in the hands of men, what can be expected but miscarriage ? And truly if we consider them with relation to heaven, they may seem scarce to have a favourable aspect from thence ; in this regard, That we have not attained in any measure the first step to a *Restoration*, which is, *Reformation*, according to that method in the Prophet ; *In the day that I shall have cleansed them from their iniquities, I will build their waste places, Ezek. 36*. Notwithstanding our *new Doctrines*, we retain our *old sins*, and it may be have added some new : The profaneness and contempt of Piety remains still as deep, and the divisions and distractions of the Church are rather encreased, which to me speaks sadly, and sometimes make me think, That this froward and adulterous generation shall be spent in conflict (always reserved to the remnant of Gods waiting people the benefit of their particular promises) & turned back into the Wildernesse of confusion, with un-

thankfull

thankfull *Israel*, to perish there, and leave the enjoyment of their hopes to posterity. The works that some think run *paralell* to ours, as that of *Israels* coming out of *Egypt*, and the building the *second Temple*, after the Captivity, have endured strong interruptions, and of some continuance. But yet I doubt not but the issue will be good; which I am perswaded to, by the observation of a *strong and fine thred* of divine providence running thorow this Contexture of *Knawery* and *Folly*, which make up the *Webb* of this present world, which disposes of things to correction, rather then destruction: The punishment of our iniquity seems not yet accomplished; I speak it not that we should wilfully protract it in obedience to an uncertain guesse, but willingly and patiently accept it, and labour that the iniquity of *Iacob* may thereby be purged, that the *plaister* may fall off when the *sore* is healed: I confesse I have not arrived at that *Seraphicall infallibility* which some profess themselves to have attained in this point; I have a good *hope*, but my *faith* must not go beyond my *promise*, for fear of *presumption*.

But something of News you expect.

In generall, our condition, as it is not so good as our friends would have it, so neither so ill as our enemies report it: The particulars you must bear with me for; I have given you an account of my own idlenesse, I shall shortly do it of others actions. The resolution of *slighting Reading* is in action, and so far proceeded, as to consent to to-morrow's march, as I believe. We sustained some losse of 14 or 15 Dragoons, I think more, at *Pangborn*, four

miles from *Reading*, which I hope we turn into the gain of a warning, and be more vigilant. Sir *William Waller*, we hear, is now at length upon his march for the West, and our Auxiliaries of *Buckingham-shire*, *Bedford-shire*, and *Hertford-shire*, in good forwardnesse: The best is, if we be not in good condition, our enemies, I think, are in little better: so that we are like to be the fitter match.

Yesterday we were very much gladdened at the arrivall of *resolved* Captain *Windgate*, whom we received as it were from the *dead*; wonder not at the expression, it is rather too modest then otherwise, for his condition in *Oxford* Castle was below the grave, as appears by the Petition of which he hath a Copy about him, *That himself and some others, might rather be executed, then continue in their present condition*: Its a miserable world when hanging is a courtesie. At first he acknowledges he was honourably intreated by the *duo fulmina Belli*, as the world takes them to be; and promised the Rights of a *Cavalier*; but they were quickly weary of welldoing, only at *Edge-hill* that monster of iniquity, *Smith*, the Provost Marshall Generall, had such a *qualme*, as to use him fairly, and confessed his ground, That he suspected the *scales* were turning, and the Prisoner like to become Keeper. But since the embitterment of that dayes work, himself and fellows have endured with more then *Christian* patience, more then *Turkish* cruelty; as close Imprisonment in a noysome place, without the benefit of converse with the living or dead, men or books; which was a punishment for the highest form of Captains and Gentlemen: the rest fed with bread.

bread and water, which they were almost pined for want of, beaten, burned with Match, set in a place called *Bridewell* up to the ankles in their own excrements: which kinde of usage hath taken away the lives of many of them, as of nine Captains, beside other Officers, Country-men, and Souldiers. One story of himself I cannot but relate for his honour, for it may be it will not stand with his modesty; That when his enlargement was procured, upon condition of obliging himself to quit the Parliament-service, he stoutly refused, in the midst of all that misery, to lose any freedom of spirit, to gain the freedom of his body; and chose rather to have his karcase in prison, then his courage. The ground of that tyrannicall cruelty they exercise, is their refusing to take that most unconscionable *Protestation*, which yet they disclaim the pressing of: Men that had not given defiance to Religion and Reason, would never so severely urge so irrationall a thing; First, I must be fully assured of His Majesties purposes and promises, *The heart of man is deceitfull, and desperately wicked, who can know it?* And the Wise-man tells such fools, *That the Kings heart is unsearchable*: if he give no other assurance of the integrity of his intentions for Religion and Liberty then what His actions of raising a Popish Army, trading with the Irish Rebels, and such kinde of imprisonments, be not angry if an honest man cannot rest fully assured.

Then I must be perswaded of the necessity and justice of the cause and means. I cannot force my own belief; It is a Scholasticall Rule, *Nemo credit,*

quia vult credere, either my conscience must be seared, or my fingers. I must professe my self not obliged by Vote or Ordinance of Parliament, though I have not so much Law as to know my self disobliged, and more conscience then to free my self where I fear Law hath bound me. And to colour the businesse, I must professe against obedience to any Order of the King contrary to the known Law. *En quomodo mentita est iniquitas sibi*; in their own snare is their foot taken: For first, The administration of this Oath is from the King, or those that represent, not onely without, but against *Parliament*, and *known Law*; which order they must yet obey, while they professe and protest not to obey any; thus in the same breath is their faith broken and given: it was said, That it was a thing onely expected, not exacted; but we are ascertained of the most violent compulsions to this contradiction that could be; so that the world need lie no longer under the ignorance, and danger of such rash and horrid perjury.

Pardon this Digression from the story of the Captain, it is not altogether impertinent. His usage continued very bad, till within this Month, when the barbarous dealing of this *Monster*, I cannot call him *man*, became odious to the authors of it, or at least was found disadvantageous to their designs, when he treated him more fairly, lest he should give in too strong evidence against him if questioned. He is now, through the good providence of God, escaped, and hath onely this misery upon him, The thought of the miseries of his friends and fellow-prisoners left there, which I hope, upon his account given,

(13)

given, that Court that is so mercifull to their enemies, will see relieved.

It is a sad thing to think how slight a thing we make of this solemn appeal to heaven, for so War is, and manage it betwixt jest and earnest, as if our thoughts were really conformable to the expressions of him who call'd fighting playing, *Let the young men arise and play before us*. If the height of our enemies faults arrive not to the desert of some severity, let the depth of our friends miseries call for so much as may help on their relief. The way of his escape, which was on Wednesday last, while some were praying for his deliverance, I leave to himself to relate; it was in generall, with much danger and difficulty, and speciall providence: As for the particulars, I hope some more able pen shall be intrusted with the whole story, so farre as concerns the Publike, that the sins of our enemies, yet all this while strongly pretending to Religion and Liberty, may go before them to Judgement.

The noyle and confusion about the execution of *Colonell Fielding*, which was then pretended, though a Reprive granted, and the peoples passing to and fro, gave the advantage; which as he is, so let all his friends be thankfull for.

If I have not yet tyred you, I could tell you news from *London*, and thoughts of it. The demolition of the idols at *Somerset House* makes a great noyle; but they say Master *Martins* zeal is like *Jehu's*, it destroys the idolatry of *Ahab*, but leaves the Calves of *Fereboam* still, and is not proceeded to *White-Hall* and *S. James*, though doubtlesse the images and idolatry.

latry there, is as contrary to the Laws of God and the Kingdom (for the Marriage Contract, they say it was private, and ought not to rise to the breach of a known Law. We hear that the Queen is impeached, as well as many more; And that there is a strange damnable Plot upon the matter discovered; And that the Parliament and City have one more warning given them, before their throats be cut; I pray God they take it, and make not the most serious intimations of providence to be in their use ridiculous and vain: if this advantage be not taken to the utmost, I shall not shut them out from my prayers, but deny them much of my pity, if any evill befall them.

But I will not be too unmercifull, I mean to you, in tyrannizing upon your patience; but till the next opportunity, which I hope will be suddenly, rest yours.

*From the Quarter
at Cavesham Lodge,
June 5. 1643.*



FINIS.